

# THE PURPOSE OF SUFFERING

2 Cor 1:1-7

Paul's unknown letter. Most practical and personal of two.

1 Corinthians — learn about church in Corinth

2 Corinthians — learn about Paul.

Paul transparent

Timeline

Paul planted church in around 52 or 53 A.D.

1 ½ yrs in home of Aquilla and Priscilla

Ephesus--few weeks...Jerusalem...Ephesus.

First letter: to believers in Corinth. Don't have this letter.

Corinthians wrote back with questions.

Second letter: Paul replies --1 Corinthians around 57-58 A.D.

Attempts to answer questions. Bad response.

Quick trip back to Corinth to *confront* trouble-makers (2 Cor.2).

Painful visit. Strong confrontation

Back to Ephesus

Third letter: brief and severely confrontational letter sent with Titus.

Titus gone for long time.

Paul left Ephesus and traveled to Troas and Macedonia to meet Titus.

Titus had encouraging report about church in Corinth.

Fourth letter: in response to good report, wrote 2 Corinthians.

Style & approach

Lenski: *...he seems to have been in a state of unusual depression and anxiety....This letter is the outpouring of his heart occasioned by the information which he received. More than any other of Paul's epistles, it bears the impress of the strong feelings under the influence of which it was written.*

Abrupt in changing from one topic to another

Meyer: *So skilful are his arts that you can hardly believe he is at different times the same man. Now he boils up like a limpid spring, suddenly he rolls away with a great noise like a mighty torrent bearing all before it, and then he flows gently along, or expands like a placid lake over all the land. Sometimes he quite loses himself as it were in the sand, but all at once he breaks out at some unexpected point.* Lange

Theme: Encouragement

**2 Cor 1:1** *Apostle by the will of God:* I am a chosen, sent-out one because of God's

supernatural call on my life.

**Timothy our brother:** helped found church & knew what situation was  
***Unto the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints...*** To all Christians in Achaia--northern part of Peloponnesus which included Corinth and its isthmus.

**Saints:** separated unto God by faith in Christ...holy...set apart...

If you are a child of God, you have right to be called **saint**!

**2 Cor 1:2** *Grace be to you ...supernatural desire and energizing power to do will of God.*

**And peace:** Quietness. Rest, tranquility of soul....unruffled temperament.

Result of grace

**From God:** can't be mustered up

**2 Cor 1:3** *Blessed* Adorable, honorable, to be lauded and praised

**Father of our Lord Jesus Christ** 2 Cor. 5:17 Because we are in Christ we can call God our Father just like Jesus can call Him His Father.

*Wier: God sees us in His Son and loves us as He loves His Son*

**The Father of mercies:** pity. Grace in action.

**The God of all comfort:** With strength, encouragement, exhortation.

*Wiersbe: God ... puts strength into our hearts so we can face our trials and triumph over them*

**Comfort:** call near, call to ones side...to console, encourage, to sooth in time of affliction or distress. Solace in time of grief or fear. (comforter--Holy Spirit)

**4. Who comforteth us in all our tribulation.** He comforts and encourages us in midst of all our pressures, anguishes and burdens.

**Tribulation:** Pressures, anguish, burdens... test our endurance, patience, faith. More than sympathy

So we, in turn can pass on to others what we have learned during these trials.

Growth means trials. James 1:2-4

God's way--encourage us **in all our tribulations**.

Trials are like the fire which melts impurities from gold 1 Pet 1:6-7

*Suffering passes, but the fact of having suffered never leaves us. Leon Bloy*

*It requires more courage to suffer than to die. Napoleon Bonaparte.*

*The best prayers have often more groans than words. John Bunyan.*

*To have suffered much is like knowing many languages. Thou hast learned to understand all. George Elliot.*

**Spurgeon:** Many people are born crying, live complaining, and die disappointed. They chew the bitter pill which they would not even know to be bitter if they had the sense to swallow it whole in the cup of patience...They are badly done by in

*their own opinion; no one's toes are so often trodden on by the black ox as theirs; the snow falls thickest round their door; the hail rattles hardest on their windows. Yet, if the truth were known, it is their fancy rather than their fate which makes things go so hard them...Losses and crosses are heavy to bear, but when our hearts are right God it is wonderful how easy the yoke becomes.*

**2 Cor 1:5** *Sufferings of Christ:* Sufferings as Christ suffered

*Sufferings:* hardships and pains which have an emotional affect on us

*Consolation:* call to ones side... encourage... to give peace in time of grief or distress

*... aboundeth* (increases, excels) *by Christ* (because of...through...)

**2 Cor 1:6** *Afflicted:* to crowd, afflict, suffer, a condition of pain, suffering, or distress... *effectual* (active, efficient, fully adequate, producing desired effect) *in the enduring of the same suffering which we also suffer* (in the cheerful consistency of the same kind of trials we as apostles are going through)

*It is for your consolation* (encouragement) *and salvation* (deliverance, rescue, safety)

**2 Cor 1:7** *... steadfast* (sure and stable).

*That as ye are partakers of the sufferings...:* companions, associates of the hardships and afflictions ye will also share, or be partners in God's comfort, consolation, and encouragement

Suffering either makes or breaks us

Suffering reveals true character and depth

*It is only the strong who are strengthened by suffering; the weak are made weaker.*

Lion Feuchtwanger: *Paris Gazette*

*Pain is the deepest thing we have in our nature, and union through. pain and suffering has always seemed more real and holy than any other.*

*We need to suffer that we may learn pity.* Letitia Elizabeth Hallam

*It is suffering and then glory. Not to have the suffering means not to have the glory.* Robert C. McQuilkin

## SO WHAT?

**Q. Are you going through suffering? How are you responding? Do you realize God has a purpose in it all?**

So we, in turn can pass on to others what we have learned

Growth means trials.

God's way--encourage us **in all our tribulations.**

Trials are like the fire which melts impurities from gold